



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Cincinnati Field Office *Special Agent in Charge Kathy A. Enstrom***

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### **LOCAL WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FALSE INCOME TAX REFUND SCAM**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Shavona R. Toles, 35, of Columbus, Ohio pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court today to one count of conspiracy to defraud the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by willfully filing false claims for federal income tax refunds. Toles faces a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office, announced the plea entered into today before U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson.

According to court documents, between March of 2009 and October of 2010, Toles conspired with others in a false income tax refund scheme, which involved the preparation and electronic filing of hundreds of false federal individual income tax returns for the 2008 and 2009 income tax years. Many of the income tax returns fraudulently claimed that the taxpayer had purchased a home, reported income that they had not earned, and claimed dependents that they did not know.

By claiming these false items on the income tax returns, the taxpayers fraudulently qualified for income tax credits, specifically the Earned Income Tax Credit and the First-Time Homebuyer Credit, which ultimately generated income tax refunds for the taxpayers that they otherwise would not have received lawfully.

Toles electronically submitted the false claims for income tax refunds through the internet and requested that the false income tax refunds be paid into bank accounts she controlled.

The false income tax refunds were split amongst Toles and the co-conspirators.

As a result of this scheme, Toles directly contributed to the submission of false claims for income tax refunds totaling \$1,416,753.

"Refunds are issued to taxpayers who are entitled to them," said Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. "IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to aggressively pursue those who prepare false claims for refunds for the purpose of enriching themselves and depleting the U.S. Treasury."

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel A. Brown and was investigated by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation.

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